

Brief Summary of Actions taken by the CTCDC during the March 21, 2013 Meeting

Membership:

Jeff Knowles retired from the City of Vacaville and also resigned from the CTCDC membership. March 21, 2013 was his last meeting with CTCDC.

- 13-05 Proposal to amend Sections 2C.37 and 4I.03 of the CA MUTCD 2012 to add Activated Blank-Out METER ON & PREPARE TO STOP sign

Discussion: Zhongren Wang, Caltrans, stated that their office proposed including an illustration of the METER ON and PREPARE TO STOP signs in the CA MUTCD. The pedestrian signal head activated blank-out METER ON sign has been incorporated into the January 2000 version of the Ramp Meter Design Manual (RMDM), which is part of the Caltrans Highway Design Manual. The RMDM is a listed reference for the CA MUTCD since 2004. In addition, the activated blank-out METER ON sign was incorporated in the Caltrans 2006 and 2010 version Standard Plans (ES-4B). The activated blank-out PREPARE TO STOP sign was also incorporated in the Caltrans 2006 and 2010 version Standard Plans (ES14-A and ES14-C).

In the preparation of the 2011 version of the CA MUTCD, these activated blank-out signs were mentioned in Sections 2C.37 and 4I.03 briefly by their text messages only, but no mock-ups were shown. No sign numbers were assigned either.

Inclusion of these activated blank-out signs into the CA MUTCD was also a suggestion received from the Federal Highway Administration field office in Sacramento.

Zhongren requested that the Committee make recommendations to include the METER ON & PREPARE TO STOP illustrations in to the CA MUTCD.

Steve Pyburn, FHWA, stated that the proposed METER ON ped-head sign does not meet the border and spacing requirements. He noted that if California adopted the proposed sign, it would be out of compliance with FHWA.

Johnny Bhullar, Caltrans, stated that the letter height for the current ped-head sign is more than the minimum height requirement, however, if the height is reduced to a minimum requirement, the spacing requirement can be achieved. He added that the border requirement is not critical. To achieve border requirements, Caltrans would have to go with a bigger sign which is not practical at the locations where these signs have been normally placed. It will also require major financing without any benefit to the motorists, because motorists are familiar with the sign message.

Committee members stated that these signs have been in operation for the last several decades and that the motoring public are very familiar with the message on the sign when it is in operation, it means the ramp metering control is on.

Action: The Committee recommended adoption of the signs, however, suggested reducing the letter height for the current METER ON ped-head sign to a minimum requirement to achieve the required spacing.

- 12-20 FHWA's 2009 MUTCD Revisions 1 and 2 –Engineering Judgment & Compliance dates

Discussion: This item was continued from the December 2012 meeting. Some Committee members suggested that there is a need to add a standard statement in the CA MUTCD which states: “if an agency deviates from the standards, the agency must document the reasons to deviate from standards.” Some of the public speakers also supported the need to have a standard statement in the CA MUTCD which requires documentation when agency/agencies deviate from the standards.

However, other members argued that agencies already document when they deviate from standards, and there is no need to add another standard into the CA MUTCD. For reader's clarification, the national MUTCD does not have this requirement.

Action: The Committee recommended Caltrans adopt the proposed language as was included in the agenda packet and adopt Option 2 instead of Option1, as Option 2 would be consistent with the national MUTCD.

6. Request for Experimentation

- 13-01 Request to Experiment with Green & Shared Roadway Bicycle Markings

Action: The Committee authorized the City of Oakland to conduct experimentation with Green and Shared Roadway Bicycle Markings as proposed. The Committee also appreciated the city on their well documented proposal.

- 13-02 Request to Experiment with Bike Boxes and Wide Bike Lane Stripe

Action: The Committee authorized the City of Davis to conduct experiment with Bike Boxes and wide Bike Lane Stripe as proposed.

7 Discussion Items

- 13-03 Bay Area 511 Sign Proposal

Sze Lei Leong from the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) stated that the Operations Committee of MTC approved a Call Box Evaluation Report which called for reducing the number of call boxes throughout the 9 County Bay Area due to reduced call volumes. To offset the negative impact of a reduced call box system, MTC intends to implement a strategy to replace them with signs informing the public of 511, a service that, in part, aids the public with information on how to call for non-emergency help using their mobile phone. This service is currently called “Freeway Aid” within the Bay Area.

Leong further stated that the MTC plan is to remove every other call box set (call box, call box sign, solar panel, pedestrian pad) in urban areas. In summary, 432 urban call boxes will be removed from a total of approximately 2086 within the Bay Area. These sites will be replaced with a sign similar to Sign Specification SG49A(CA), with the exception of an alternate wording that informs the public of call box services. The MTC Staff is working with a marketing research firm to develop the most appropriate nomenclature (i.e. “Call 511, Roadside Assistance” or “Call 511, Freeway Assistance” etc.) through the use of focus groups and surveys. The MTC will present the results during the next CTCDC meeting and request permission to proceed with installing these signs within the Bay Area. The cost of fabrication and installation of the signs will be paid for, and managed by, MTC SAFE.

Committee member Hamid Bahadori stated that a similar request was received from LA County in the past and they have installed this sign. If this Committee had already given approval to LA, then the MTC could replace call boxes with 511 signs without further action by the Committee.

It was suggested to go thru the previous meeting minutes and see what type of approval was given to LA.

8 Information Items

13-04 Option of splitting the material in the MUTCD into two separate Documents Proposed by FHWA

Johnny Bhullar gave information on this item to the Committee that FHWA has proposed to split the National MUTCD into two documents. One will carry SHALL statements only and the other will include all the “Guidance” and “May” requirements. This process is at the very beginning stages and states and agencies will find more on this proposal in the future. He added that the majority of the states/agencies who commented on this proposal have voted no on the split.

John Fisher, former CTCDC Chairman and current member of the National Committee, stated that there are more questions than answers at this time at the national level in regards to this split proposal.